Yes, Shrimati Satya Bahin. Next Question.

**Shortage of Medicines**

*122. SHRIMATI SATYA BAHIN:†
SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a number of press reports which appeared in June, 1992 about the shortage of medicines;

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto and what remedial steps have been taken in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that producers have deliberately stopped production as the sales turnover is very low despite the fact that the products are price decontrolled:

(d) if so, the names of those products;

(e) whether it is also a fact that producers of products based on imported bulk drugs have stopped production in order to have higher price of bulk drugs than the weighted average price;

(f) if so, the names of such products where higher prices of bulk drugs have been claimed; and

(g) what are the names of producers who are importing bulk drugs from their principals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI CHINTA MOHAN): (a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**Statement**

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The position of the reported shortages has been analysed. Most of the shortages so reported are of specific brands and of medicines having low turn-over. In most such cases, equivalent medicinns are available in other brands. Government watches and invariably contacts producers of specific brands in order to overcome shortages as and when they are reported in any area of the country.

In some cases such Vitamin C, there were problems in regard to pricing of bulk drugs and formulations which have since been tackled and the situation should normalise soon.

(c) No such instance has come to the notice of the Government.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No such instance of stoppage of production has come to the notice of the Government.

(f) Does not arise.

(g) Companywise imports/origin of imports are not monitored in this Department.

**श्रीमती सत्या बहिन :** उपसभापति महोदया, मैं मंत्री महोदय को धन्यवाद देना चाहती हूं जिन्होंने यह स्वीकार किया कि दवाइयों में कमी आई है हालांकि 9 जुलाई को मंत्री महोदय ने यह बताया था कि दवाइयों की कोई शार्टेज नहीं है। पहले तो मैं यह स्पष्टीकरण चाहती हूं कि 9 जुलाई से अब तक क्या डवलपमेंट हुई हैं? दूसरे ड्रग कंट्रोल 1987 के बाद दवाइयों के मूल्यों में सौ प्रतिशत की बढ़ोतरी हुई है क्या सरकार को इसकी जानकारी है? इसके कारण दवाइयों का उत्पादन भी कम हो गया है और गरीब आदमी की पहुंच से दूर हो गई है ये दवाइयां और जो दवाइयां मिलती हैं वे भी मनमाने मूल्यों पर मिलती है। मैं जानना चाहती हूं कि इसकी तरफ सरकार का ध्यान है या नहीं?

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN: Madam, what the hon. Member has said is not correct. I have personally gone to various druggists and enquired the position. At present,

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Satya Bahin.

there are 40,000 drugs in India. Out of this 47 drugs are out of supply today, Even out of these 47, 22 drugs are out of price control and 25 are within the price control. Case by case I have examined these 47 drugs, and for the benefit of the House I can place them on the Table of the House.

The manufacturers mentioned the names, particularly of two drugs. One is Dilantin. The same drug is available under the name of Eptoin and now the same quality is available in the market. About the shortage of vitamin-C, we have given the price revision immediately and now this drug is also easily available. Even to the CGHS Dispensary I have gone yesterday and checked up, and they are all available. There is also another drug, by name Lanoxin. Lanoxin is a cardiac stimulant. It is a very important drug, and the company has changed the name to generic name, Digoxin. It is available in the market. All the drugs are available today—there is no shortage of medicines—except a very few brand names which are outdated and which are not coming to the market and there is less marketing.

**श्रीमती सत्या बहिन** : महोदया, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से इस संदर्भ में यह पूछना चाहती हूं कि कुछ जीवन रक्षक दवाइयां हैं जैसे डेकाडोन है, पोलीडोन है, डेरीपाइलन है, रेस्टोमिलन का इंजेक्शन है, इनकी बाजार में वास्तव में कमी है। इसके साथ ही कुछ दवाइयां ऐसी हैं जो घटिया स्तर की बनती हैं। इस संबंध में क्या माननीय मंत्री जी को इस बात की जानकारी है कि अभी कुछ दिन पहले आन्ध्र प्रदेश में जो पोलियो के इंजेक्शन दिये गये थे उनसे पोलियो और डेवलप हो रहा है और इस कारण से पोलियो के इंजेक्शन बंद कर दिये गये हैं? दूसरा इस संबंध में माननीय मंत्री जी से मेरा सवाल यह है कि दवाओं के संबंध में जो आयात और निर्यात होता है वह इनका विभाग मोनीटर नहीं करता है। दवाओं का बहुत ही अहम मामला है। जनता के जीवन के साथ इसका संबंध जुड़ा हुआ है। इसलिए मैं पूछना चाहती हूं कि इस संबंध में स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय या वाणिज्य मंत्रालय और शायद उद्योग मंत्रालय से और रसायन मंत्रालय से तो इसका संबंध है ही, क्या इन मंत्रालयों में आपस में कोआर्डिनेशन के लिए कोई एजेन्सी है या नहीं है?

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN: Madam, what the hon. Member has said is not correct. I myself am from Andhra Pradesh, and polio vaccine is available. The problem is that of maintaining the correct temperature.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, she did not say it is not available. She has said that because of some polio vaccine which was given to some children, they got polio. Maybe the chain has broken... (*Interruptions*)...It is not an injection.

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN: Actually, the problem is that the vaccine that is available is not maintained at the correct temperature. The vaccine has to be maintained at the correct temperature. When it goes to a Primary Health Centre, if they cannot maintain the correct temperature, the effect of the drug goes. Even if the doctor gives the medicine, it will not have any effect. Such cases are there where infection of polio and all these things have come up. Then she was talking about import duty reduction.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No coordination between the Ministries.

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN: About coordination, we are constantly in touch with the Health Ministry. The Health Ministry is monitoring all these things. There is a lot of improvement in the health care, and we will try to do our best in future also.

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Madam Deputy Chairman, I am glad that the Minister has confirmed tha

there is no shortage of medicines and said that he has verified personally. There are two parts of this question, Madam. One is shortage of essential drugs and the other is stoppage of production by producers in order to have higher prices for bulk drugs than the weighted average prices. Madam, the porcedures save, stopped production. In this connection the Department itself has issued a Handbook of Compay-wise Products of Monitored Bulk Drugs from 1985—90, and there is a list of drugs given. Drug production has either been stopped or it is gradually being lowered down. The position is that because of less supply there is a shortage. But there have been reports in the press. Several newspapers have reported that there has been a shortage. If there is no shortage, why don't you come forward and give a press statement that there is no shortage of medicines? On the 10th June, *The Hindustan Times* has reported on the first page that even life-saving drugs were in shortage. But, contrary to that, if there is no shortage, why has not the Minister come forward with his own press conference, whch used to be there in the past also? Whenever such things appear in the press, the Minister must give a press statement that it is not a fact. Now, out of these 24 drugs which *The Hindustan Times* has mentioned...

**उपसभापति** : अगर आप जरा क्वेस्चन छोटा करें तो आनसर ज्यादा आ जाएगा।

**श्री रजनी रंजन साहू** : मैं क्वेस्चन छोटा कर लेता हूं।

Out of 24 drugs, 19 are de-controlled drugs. "*The Hndustan Times*" has mentioned specifically 24 drugs. Nineteen drugs are out of price-control. Why are these 19 drugs in short supply in the market?

Secondly, there was a system of average weighted price. Now that has been abolished. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Department is going to see through an effective monitoring cell, that the production of essential drugs by manufacturers must be 20 per cent of their total production as recommended by the Hathi Committee Report. This is part (a) of my question.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. That is enough.

आप बैठ जाइये। इतनी ज्यादा दवा एक दिन में पिलायेंगे तो मरीज मर जायेगा।

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN: Regarding "*The Hindustan Times*" press-clipping, I have gone through it word by word. It has mentioned some drugs like Rifampicin which is an anti-Tuberculosis drug. They have mentioned the brand name particularly of company by name "Lupin." They are not producing this drug under the name "Rifampicin." But there are so many companies producing the same type of drug, of good quality. They are available in the market. They have come for a price-revision. We are making the price-revision every soon.

Coming to the advice that some companies should produce 20 essential drugs...

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: The production of essential drugs by every company must be 20 per cent of its total production. That is my suggestion. Are you going to implement that suggestion? This is based on the Hathi Committee recommendation.

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN: I will look into it at the time of the next drug policy.

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Is he going to give a Press statement that there is shortage of drugs?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him make the statement on the floor of the House which is more important than making it outside.

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: He should hold a Press conference.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: When the House is in session, I think, the House is more important just now.

**श्री सुन्दर सिंह भण्डारी :** मैडम, इस सवाल के जवाब से ऐसा अनुभव होता है कि ड्रग प्रोड्यूसर की रक्षा करने के लिये सरकार तैयार हो गयी है। इन्होंने यह तो माना है कि लो टर्न ओवर है पर उसका जवाब उन्होंने दिया है कि एक्युवलेंट मेडीसंस बन रही है, इसलिये हर्जा नहीं होता। जब यह शिकायत की गयी कि उन दवाओं का असर क्यों नहीं होता तो वे स्टोरेज के डिफेक्ट पर चले जाते हैं बजाय इसके कि उसके एक्युवलेंट मेडीसंस, जो स्फूरियस मेडीसंस है, बिलो स्टेंडर्ड मेडीसंस हैं उसके लिये आप प्रोड्यूसर की गलती बताते या उस तरफ तवज्जह देते। अगर लोगों का अल्ट्रानेटिव मेडीसंस से काम चल गया होता तो जो दवायें कम संख्या में तैयार की जा रही हैं, उनकी कीमतें एकदम से 50 परसेंट शूट नहीं करती। तो क्या यह जो मार्केट ट्रेंड है, प्राइस राइज है यह पब्लिक के रीऐक्शन के लिये प्रापर ग्राफ नहीं है? तो सरकार बजाय इसके कि जनता की चिंता करे, बढ़ी हुई कीमतों का शिकार उनको न बनने दे, आप अल्ट्रानेटिव मेडीसंस की बात करके एक प्रकार से स्फूरियस ड्रग्स और बिलो-स्टेंडर्ड ड्रग्स के बनाने वाले मैनुफैक्चरर्स की रक्षा करना चाहते हैं। आश्चर्य इस बात का है, सरकार ने अंत में यह कहा है कि हमारे पास इम्पोर्ट की मानेटरिंग नहीं है। ये ड्रग्स इम्पोर्टेड मेडीसंस के आधार पर बन रही हैं और आज ये फारेन कंपनीज हिन्दुस्तान की पालिसीज को एफेक्ट करने के लिये डेलीबिरेट्ली इम्पोर्ट को कम करके हिन्दुस्तान के मरीजों को मार रही हैं। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या सरकार फिर से अपनी ड्रग पालिसी पर विचार करेगी और यह जो बिलो स्टेंडर्ड दवायें बनाने वाली कंपनियां हैं उनको हाल अप करेगी?

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN: Madam, we are maintaining good quality, and our drug policy brings availability, good quality and reasonable prices.

SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI: The prices are not reasonable.

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN: I am coming to your point. Within five years after 1987 there is a change in the mood of the durg industry. Earlier they were getting a profit of more than 8 per cent. Now they are complaining about decline in profits today. Today there was an editorial in the Financial Express that the pricing mechanism should be realistic. They say at present thed are getting a margin of 2 per cent. Our main concern is to protect the common man. At the same time we want to protect the health of the industry. Keeping in view the interests of both we have to balance the situation. In the coming revised drug policy, we will keep in view the views of the House and the Members of Parliament. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: Vitamin C is in acute short supply today. It was not available during the last one month not only to consumers, but also to formulators of drugs, wherein Vitamin C is an ingredient. That is why they could not manufacture their products. Therefore, not only Vitamin C as a drug is not available or is in short supply, there is also a shortage of drugs which have Vitamin C as their ingredient. I understand the Government has given licence to some manufacturers to manufacture Vitamin C here. Maybe, due to pricing, they have stopped the manufacture of Vitamin C. I would like to know whether the Government will consider canalising these items so that the STC may be asked to import in the meanwhile to make Vitamin C available to the formulators in this country.

The hon. Minister has said that a viable pricing has been given to manufacturers of Vitamin C. May I know the position from the Minister? What was the pricing before and what pricing has he given now? I would also like to know whether the private manufacturers have accepted the manufacture of Vitamin C. If so, from when will they manufacture it and when will it be made available to the manufacturers of formulations?

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN: Vitamin C is readily available. I have gone to CGHS and found it is available there.

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: No. It is not available...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: ...in the market.

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN: Coming to the manufacture of Vitamin C, I would like to say that some Members of Parliament have represented to me. Earlier, about two months back the price of it was about Rs. 340 per kilogram.. Within a short time of two to three months, we have given two price revisions. Now it is available for Rs. 445 kilogram. The actual problem is that there are two manufacturers of Vitamin C today. They are producing it or giving it to some companies to produce Vitamin C. Vitamin C is not only used in the form of tablet, but it can also be used in different forms, such as Glucon-C. In the Glucose packets they add Vitamin-C and sell it. The people who are getting more margin in manufacturing Glucon and other products, they are changing this tablet form to other food products and so on. That is why the shortage is seen. Actually there is no shortage. If there is a shortage, as the hon. Members have suggested, we will definitely import the drug in bulk and see that something is done immediately.

**Setting up of Joint Venture Projects abroad by Electronic Trade and Technology Development Corporation**

*123. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Electronics Trade and Technology Development Corporation proposes to set up joint venture projects abroad and open offices in European Economic Community and Far East;

(b) if so, what are the details of these proposals; and

(c) what expenditure is likely to be involved in opening the offices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha.

**Statement**

(a) The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for 1992-93 signed between Electronics Trade and Technology Development Corporation Limited (ET&T), a public sector undertaking and the Department of Electronics *inter-alia* provides for promotion of international trade by establishing presence through offices, warehouses and liaisoning contacts in commercial centres like U.S.A. European Economic Community (EEc) and Far East countries for its own as well as other products and services.

(b) and (c) No specific proposals have been finalised so far.

SHRI P. UPENDRA: The Electronics Trade and Technology Development Corporation is one of the most inefficiently managed public sector undertaking; which I have seen. I am not saying this from knowledge derived from others, but it is from my own personal experience. They have been making television sets. Enamoured of the public sector, I bought one television set. From day one, it gave such a trouble that after some time I got desperate and re-